

OPPOSITION TO SOVIET SCHEMES

of the war and to play a prominent role in the dramatic developments of 1945-1946 in Kurdistan.

Thus the government was never free from worry and complications with regard to tribal affairs. More important, however, was the connection of the Big Powers with the tribes and their attitudes toward the tribal rebellions.

During the war Russia played a somewhat more limited role than Britain with regard to tribes. But this role should not be overlooked. First of all, the Russians controlled Azerbaijan with her Kurdish centers all along the Iraqi border. Important Kurdish towns such as Mahabad, Baneh, Saqqiz, Khoi, and Maku were in their zone. Secondly, the Russians extended their control over Iranian Turko-man tribes located east of the Caspian Sea. Of these two groups the Kurds were politically more important because of their sheer numbers in the Soviet zone and because of their well-known and traditional aspirations for independence. In addition, anything done in Iranian Kurdistan was bound to have repercussions in the Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iraq and could thus vitally affect international relations. The Big Powers' activity among the Kurds during the second World War would deserve a special study. It suffices to say here that this activity was full of complicated intrigue that made it difficult in some cases to discern who was the real source of inspiration behind one or another Kurdish move. The Russians consistently endeavored to woo the Kurds to their side and to render them hostile to the British and the Iranian governments. In 1942 several Kurdish chiefs were invited to visit Baku. After their return it was asserted that some of them were ready to play the Russian

game. As compensation the Russians dangled before them the promise of Kurdish autonomy. The Soviet Consulate at Rezaieh was very active. The importance attached to the Kurdish question by the Russians could be measured by the fact that the chief of the Soviet Embassy's propaganda section, Press Attache Danil Komissarov, was detailed to Rezaieh as consul for eight months in 1944. The Russians seemed to attach prime importance to the Kurdish tribal center of Mahabad (formerly Sauj Bulaq), seat of the influential chieftain Qazi Mo-hammed. In Mahabad an irregular paper, *Nisht Man*, was published in the Kurdish language under Soviet auspices.